

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
CINCEUR
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CINCEUR FOR POLAND AND OPS
CINCUSAFE FOR POLAD
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E O 11652: NA
TAGS: PINR, WB
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC REPORTING: DIETRICH STOBBE, BERLIN'S NEW
GOVERNING MAYOR
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REF: USBERLIN 1164

1. SUMMARY: DIETRICH STOBBE IS THE YOUNGEST MAN YET TO
HAVE BEEN ELECTED GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN. HE INHERITS
ALMOST ALL OF THE OUTGOING GOVERNING MAYOR'S PROBLEMS
BOTH WITH RESPECT TO RUNNING THE CITY AND IN HOLDING

HIS OWN PARTY TOGETHER. STOBBE HAS CONSIDEREABLE TALENTS; INTELLIGENT, HARDWORKING, WELL-INFORMED, AND WELL- PLUGGED INTO THE ALLIES AND BONN GOVERNMENT HS IS IN AN EXCELLENT POSITION TO BRIDGE THE GAPS WHICH INEVITABLY ARISE OVER BERLIN POLICIES AND WITHIN THE BERLIN SPD. HIS ABILITY AS AN ADMINISTRATOR IS UNTESTED AND MAY PROVE HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE. ADDITIONALLY HE IS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN IN THE CITY AND WILL HAVE TO PUT SOME EFFORT INTO BUILDING HIS IMAGE AS A POLITICIAN. END SUMMARY.

2. DIETRICH STOBBE WAS SWORN IN AS GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN MAY 2, 1977. AT 39 YEARS OF AGE HE BECOMES THE SEVENTH ELECTED GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN SINCE THE CITY ADMINISTRATION WAS REFORMED FOLLOWING THE DIVISION OF THE CITY IN 1948. HE IS ALSO THE YOUNGEST MAN TO ASSUME THE OFFICE. (SCHUETZ WAS 41; BRANDT 43 WHEN THEY TOOK OFFICE.)

3. STOBBE'S RISE IN THE BERLIN SPD HAS BEEN BOTH STEADY AND RAPID. BORN IN EAST PRUSSIA, AND BROUGHT AS A CHILD TO STADE, HE JOINED THE SPD IN 1960 AFTER HE CAME TO BERLIN TO STUDY POLITICS AT THE OTTO-SUHR INSTITUTE. HE HAS SAID HE DECIDED TO JOIN THE PARTY BECAUSE OF THE GODESBERG PROGRAM. BY 1962 STOBBE HAD BECOME SPD DISTRICT BUSINESS MANAGER FOR BERLIN-CHARLOTTENBURG. SHORTLY THEREAFTER BE BECAME THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT AND PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR KURT NEUBAUER, THEN SENATOR FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(AT THAT TIME STOBBE DEVELOPED A CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH NEUBAUER WHOM STOBBE HAS LONG VIEWED AS HIS MENTOR. AT THE SPECIAL SPD PARTEITAG MAY 1 WHICH SELECTED HIM AS THE PARTY CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNING MAYOR, STOBBE HIMSELF COMMENTED ON THE IRONY OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS NEUBAUER'S FALL WHICH BROUGHT HIM INTO OFFICE.)

4. STOBBE ENTERED THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 1967; HE WAS ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE BERLIN SPD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THE SAME YEAR HE BECAME PARTY BUSINESS MANAGER. IN 1973 AT AGE 35 STOBBE BECAME THE YOUNGEST SENATOR (MINISTER) IN ALL GERMANY WHEN HE WAS NAMED SENATOR FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS, THE POSITION HE HELD UNTIL HIS ELECTION AS GOVERNING MAYOR. HE IS NOW THE YOUNGEST HEAD OF A LAND GOVERNMENT IN THE FRG.

5. STOBBE IS INTELLIGENT, COMPETENT AND POLITICALLY

ASTUTE. DUE TO HIS FOUR YEARS AS SENATOR FOR
FEDERAL AFFAIRS HE HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS WITH THE
BONN GOVERNMENT, AND HAS DEVELOPED AN UNDERSTANDING
FOR BERLIN'S POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE;
BOTH IN TERMS OF THE SMALL AND INTRICATE DETAILS AND
WITH RESPECT TO BROADER POLICY OUTLINES. HE HAS FOR
EXAMPLE MADE IMPORTANT SPEECHES ABOUT BERLIN. EQUALLY
IMPORTANT HE KNOWS AND APPRECIATES THE SHADED DIFFER-
ENCES IN VIEWS ON BERLIN POLICY AMONG THE ALLIES
AND WITHIN THE FRG ITSELF. HE IS ALSO REPORTED TO
BE THE ONLY BERLIN SPD POLITICIAN, BESIDES
HARRY RISTOCK, TO COMMAND CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT'S
RESPECT. STOBBE IS THEREFORE WELL EQUIPPED TO
REPRESENT BERLIN'S INTERESTS IN BONN AND WITH THE
ALLIES. HE CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED TO SPEAK
AUTHORITATIVELY IN DEFENSE OF BERLIN'S INTERESTS
WHEN THE NEED ARISES.
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6. IF STOBBE IS EMINENTLY PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE
"INTERNATIONAL" SIDE OF HIS GOVERNING MAYOR'S RESPON-
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CIBILITIES, THERE ARE QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF MANY
OBSERVERS WHETHER HE IS EQUALLY WELL-EQUIPPED TO
RUN A CITY OF 2,000,000. SINCE THE DAYS OF ERNST
REUTER, GOVERNING MAYORS OF BERLIN HAVE HAD TO BE
BOTH STATESMEN, CAPABLE OF FOCUSING WESTERN ATTENTION
AND INTEREST ON WEST BERLIN, AND RALLYING SUPPORT
FOR THE CITY IN TIMES OF CRISES, AND AT THE SAME
TIME TO BE ABLE TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF A COMPLEX
CITY ADMINISTRATION WITH ITS MYRIADS OF MUNDANE
PROBLEMS---STREETS TO BE REPAIRED, GARBAGE TO BE
COLLECTED AND ALL THE OTHER NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS
WHICH MUST BE PROMPTLY AND EFFICIENTLY MET BY THE CITY
BUREAUCRACY. OF WELL-KNOWN BERLIN POSTWAR MAYORS
REUTER, BRANDT AND SCHUETZ, ONLY REUTER WAS A FIRST
CLASS CITY ADMINISTRATOR. IT WAS IN LARGE MEASURE
SCHUETZ'S FAILURE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH INTERNAL
FINANCIAL, CONSTRUCTION, ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONNEL
MATTERS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT HIS DOWNFALL. STOBBE
WILL HAVE TO DEVELOP A GRASP OF THIS PART OF HIS
JOB QUICKLY.

7. A SECOND MAJOR TASK BEFORE STOBBE, AS IT WAS FOR
HIS PREDECESSOR(S), WILL BE TO HOLD HIS PARTY TOGETHER.
IT HAS ALREADY BEEN OBSERVED THAT HE REPRESENTS THE
NARROW /CENTER" OF THE BERLIN SPD AND WILL HAVE TO
USE HIS CONSIDERABLE AND OFT-CITED SKILL AS A COMPROMISER
OF VIEWS TO KEEP FACTIONAL PARTY FIGHTS AT A MINIMUM.
HIS OVERWHELMING ELECTION BY THE SPECIAL PARTY CONGRESS
AS THE SPD'S CANDIDATE TO REPLACE SCHUETZ (REFTEL)
AND THE OPEN SUPPORT GIVEN HIM BY HARRY RISTOCK, HIS

PRINCIPAL RIVAL IN THE SCHUETZ-SUCCESSOR CONTEST, AUGURS
WELL IN THIS REGARD.

8. IN HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE SPECIAL SPD PARTY CONGRESS
MAY 1, STOBBE TOLD THE DELEGATES THAT HE BELIEVES
THAT THOSE SELECTED BY THE SPD TO BEAR THE RESPON-
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SIBILITIES FOR GOVERNING BERLIN, (HIMSELF FIRST AND
FOREMOST, BUT OTHERS AS WELL) MUST UNDERSTAND THAT
THEY ARE IN POWER TO SERVE THE CITY AND NOT TO DERIVE
PERSONAL BENEFITS. "THE ARCH ENEMY OF THE SPD," HE
DECLARED TO THE APPLAUDING DELEGATES, " IS OPPORTUNISM."
STOBBE PROMISED TO RETURN BERLIN TO A POSITION OF
PROMINENCE BY ACHIEVEMENTS, OBSERVING THAT "FLOWERY
PHRASES" ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.

9. ANOTHER PROBLEM WHICH FACES TOBBE, AT LEAST AT
THE BEGINNING OF HIS TENURE OF OFFICE, IS THAT HE IS
A RELATIVE UNKNOWN TO THE BERLIN POPULACE WHEN COMPARED
WITH MEN LIKE SCHUETZ, NEUBAUER AND EVEN RISTOCK.
HE IS NOT A GREAT SPEAKER, NOR AN IMPOSING PERSONALITY.
IN FACT, IN THE LAST BERLIN SITY ELECTION (1975)
HE FAILED TO CARRY HIS OWN REINICKENDORF DISTRICT AND
COULD ONLY RETURN TO THE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES ON
THE BASIS OF THE DISTRICT LIST. HOWEVER, HE CONVEYS
A BIT THE IMAGE OF BEING A NORMAL BERLINER WITHOUT
PRETENSIONS, AND HE MAY JUST DEVELOP THE NECESSARY
POPULARITY AS THE GLARE OF PUBLICITY TURNS ON HIM
AS GOVERNING MAYOR.

10. IN SUMMARY, STOBBE STRIKES US AS BRINING TO HIS
NEW POSITION MANY OF THE SAME ATTRIBUTES AS SCHUETZ.
GIVEN THE LONG DECLINE OF THE SPD IN BERLIN, STOBBE
REALIZES THAT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE STATESMANLIKE AND
CREATE A GOOD IMPRESSION OUTISDE OF BERLIN, BUT THE
GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN MUST RUN THE SHOW AS WELL. WE
BELIEVE THIS IS A DIFFICULT TASK FOR STOBBE WHO, WHEN HE
WIELDS THE NEW BROOM, WILL BE SWEEPING AWAY FRIENDS
AND COLLEAGUES AND MANY ESTABLISED PRACTIES HERE,
AND HE WILL NEED A GOOD MEASURE OF FRITITUDE. WE
WISH HIM WELL, AND WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE DID
BETTER THAN EXPECTED, BY WHICH WE MEAN THAT THE SPD COULD
EMERGE TO FACE THE 1979 ELECTIONS IN REASONABLE GOOD
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ORDER.

11. A GOOD FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, KNOWING
ENGLISH WELL, AND ONE OF THE FEW BERLIN POLITICIANS
TO SPEAK FRENCH, STOBBE IS OF COURSE AN IDEAL CHOICE
FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ALLIED RELATIONS WITH
THE SENAT. WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD THE MOST CORDIAL
POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH HIM. GEORGE

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